

*For Official Use Only*



## **Special Memorandum**

MOSCOW, BEIJING ON THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

*For Official Use Only*

25 JULY 1980  
FB 80-10026

**This report is based exclusively on foreign media materials and is published by FBIS without coordination with other U.S. Government components.**

Automatically decontrolled  
six months from date of issue.

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**FBIS SPECIAL MEMORANDUM  
25 JULY 1980

## MOSCOW, BEIJING ON THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

## C O N T E N T S

Introduction . . . . .	i
Moscow Decries Positions of Both Major Candidates . .	1
Tone of Coverage . . . . .	1
Issues and Candidates . . . . .	1
Republican Convention . . . . .	2
Postelection Outlook . . . . .	3
Heavy Beijing Coverage Discerns Conservative Trend . .	3
Scale and Tone of Coverage . . . . .	3
Issues and Candidates . . . . .	4
Prospects . . . . .	6

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**FBIS SPECIAL MEMORANDUM  
25 JULY 1980

- i -

**I N T R O D U C T I O N**

The differing approaches Moscow and Beijing have taken to this year's presidential election campaign reflect their changing relationships with the United States. With the sharp deterioration of U.S. ties, Moscow has minimized serious analysis of the 1980 campaign and concentrated on attacking the foreign and defense policies of the two major candidates. Beijing, reflecting the increased importance it has attached to Sino-U.S. relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, has for the first time paid close attention to a U.S. election, taking particular note of expressions of anti-Soviet sentiment during the campaign.

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FBIS SPECIAL MEMORANDUM  
25 JULY 1980

- 1 -

## MOSCOW DECRIES POSITIONS OF BOTH MAJOR CANDIDATES

Moscow has thus far shown no inclination to favor publicly either of the major contenders in the 1980 presidential race. Soviet press correspondents and political observers are portraying the election as a barren choice between a Republican from the far right and an incumbent Democrat bent on returning to the Cold War. Moscow up to now has sustained its vigorous attacks on President Carter and his Administration's Soviet policies. Tempering their traditionally harsh treatment of Governor Reagan, however, Soviet media have professed to see a recent moderation in his foreign policy positions.

## TONE OF COVERAGE

Soviet commentary to date has concentrated on flaying the American political system and the atmosphere of "hysterical" anti-Sovietism in both parties. There has been little effort to present the candidates' positions in greater depth, as was done during the last two presidential election campaigns. IZVESTIYA's Washington correspondent on 21 June illustrated Moscow's plague-on-both-your-houses approach. He charged that the economic programs of the two major candidates would bring the Americans "the same burdens--inflation, unemployment, and recession." Despite their claims, he asserted, both President Carter and Governor Reagan pursue the same "hegemonistic, adventuristic, aggressive" foreign policy; both oppose ratification of SALT II, and both "gamble on military force and interference in the internal affairs of other states."

## ISSUES AND CANDIDATES

As the architect of current U.S. policies toward the USSR, President Carter remains the most frequent target of Moscow's wrath. He is regularly accused of trying to whip up American chauvinism and war hysteria and of exploiting the Iranian and Afghan crises to strengthen his electoral support. Soviet commentators have shown no inclination to tone down their attacks on the President out of concern over the prospect of a Reagan administration.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FBIS SPECIAL MEMORANDUM  
25 JULY 1980

- 2 -

While relentlessly pursuing its polemic against the incumbent President, Moscow has recently moderated some of its traditional criticism of Governor Reagan. Although continuing to characterize him as a rightist in the American political spectrum, Soviet observers have commented favorably on some of his positions. Central Committee information official Oleg Anichkin maintained in a 10 June Moscow domestic radio program, for example, that Reagan, sensing victory, had "recently started behaving in a more restrained fashion." Anichkin cited as evidence the candidate's pronouncements "on holding the Olympic games in Moscow and on the SALT II treaty." Counterbalancing earlier reporting of Reagan's opposition to SALT II, IZVESTIYA on 29 June reported the candidate's foreign policy adviser Richard Allen as saying that Reagan would not put a halt to SALT negotiations with the Soviet Union. Soviet media reacted to the 14 July CBS television interview in which the governor predicted that the USSR would try to help President Carter get reelected, dismissing that remark as "demagoguery," but they have so far ignored his acceptance speech at the Republican convention.

Evidently skeptical of Congressman Anderson's chances of being elected, Moscow has given his campaign little attention. His independent race and the support he has received have been portrayed mostly as a reflection of voter discontent with a Carter-Reagan choice. Some commentators have stressed the role Anderson's candidacy could play in preventing either of the major party candidates from getting the necessary votes in the electoral college. Moscow has credited Anderson with moving away from "extremely rightist views" and has reported favorably on his support for SALT II and opposition to the development of the MX missile.

Moscow has played down Senator Kennedy's chances of being the Democratic nominee, emphasizing evidence of his political vulnerability within the party. Although in the early stages of the campaign Soviet media compared his stance on international issues favorably with President Carter's, they have made little effort in recent weeks to spell out distinctions between the Democratic contenders.

#### REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

While maintaining their relative circumspection on Governor Reagan himself, Soviet media responded sharply to the party platform approved by last week's Republican convention in Detroit. Commentators attacked the Republicans for rejecting SALT II, calling for U.S. military superiority, and seeking to "turn back the clock." The 19 July PRAVDA said that the convention platform and speeches suggest that the Republicans view the world "through

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FBIS SPECIAL MEMORANDUM

25 JULY 1980

- 3 -

the sights of a submachinegun." IZVESTIYA charged on 20 July that the platform even broke with agreed principles of U.S.-Soviet relations that the Ford and Carter Administrations had left unquestioned. At the same time, Soviet commentators have diluted their attacks on the Republican platform by alluding to the questionable significance of such documents after the November election.

#### POSTELECTION OUTLOOK

Moscow is hedging its bets on the future. Speculation about the direction of U.S.-Soviet relations beyond November has been conspicuously absent in commentary for the domestic audience. In slightly more expansive commentary for audiences abroad, Soviet specialists have professed readiness to work with the next White House incumbent, whoever he may be, but have discouraged hopes for a rapid improvement in relations. USA and Canada Institute director Georgiy Arbatov commented in this vein in a 9 July Moscow radio interview broadcast to North America. Arbatov expressed long-term optimism about the prospects for U.S.-Soviet detente but cautioned against any expectation of sharp changes for the better immediately after the election. The "emotions and moods" generated during the campaign, he argued, develop their own inertia; political life is not like "water in the faucet," which one can manipulate at will.

#### HEAVY BEIJING COVERAGE DISCERNS CONSERVATIVE TREND

Chinese media have depicted a clear conservative swing in the attitudes of American voters in response to persisting economic difficulties and anxieties concerning the U.S. strategic posture against the Soviet Union. The emergence of President Carter and Ronald Reagan as the major candidates is seen as reflecting that shift in the public mood. Chinese commentary, more voluminous than on prior campaigns, has predictably avoided explicitly stating a preference for any candidate and has thus far shied away from speculating on the outcome in November.

#### SCALE AND TONE OF COVERAGE

The unprecedented scale of Beijing's coverage of the campaign is in keeping with the broader and more intensive attention Chinese media have given to foreign events in general in recent

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FBIS SPECIAL MEMORANDUM

25 JULY 1980

- 4 -

years, and specifically to events in the United States since the normalization of Beijing-Washington relations. Beginning last November, the Chinese news agency XINHUA carried generally straightforward reports on the decisions of all major candidates to run and on the results of all the party primary elections. XINHUA and the Beijing press have also carried reports on the background of various candidates and commentaries on the principal campaign issues. By contrast, Chinese media in 1976 carried only two brief reports on the entire election campaign: one in August on the selection of the presidential candidates of the "two major U.S. bourgeois parties" and another in November reporting the Carter victory. A single XINHUA dispatch covered the presidential elections in 1972.

Beijing's treatment of the campaign reflects the ambivalence toward international and domestic policy concerns that is common to Chinese reporting on the United States in general. Much of the commentary on the elections has registered Chinese attitudes toward the United States as a strategic and economic power; at the same time, an inherently conflicting strain in this comment manifests a compulsion to assert Chinese ideological purity and institutional superiority. Comment contrasting the U.S. and Chinese systems seems designed to counter domestic malaise and disaffection, which paradoxically may have been fanned by the favorable Beijing media treatment of the United States that accompanied Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping's U.S. visit last year and lent support to the unexpected strength of the dissident "democracy movement" in Beijing. Thus Chinese comment on the U.S. election campaign has pointed to the great expense involved in running for president, to the lack of significant choice offered the U.S. voter between candidates equally linked to U.S. monopolistic financial "cliques," and to alleged voter apathy throughout the United States, which Beijing ascribes to the nature of "bourgeois" democratic institutions and practices.

#### ISSUES AND CANDIDATES

Chinese commentary has portrayed the U.S. electorate as increasingly conservative in mood and has attributed the success of President Carter and Governor Reagan in the primaries to this trend in public opinion. Initially Beijing related the conservative trend to popular anxiety concerning U.S. economic problems. Later, however, Beijing concluded--with scarcely concealed satisfaction--that the "shock" of Iran and Afghanistan had engendered widespread U.S. concern about foreign policy, particularly with regard to the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY



FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FBIS SPECIAL MEMORANDUM  
25 JULY 1980

- 5 -

In reporting the Democratic Party primaries, Chinese comment has portrayed President Carter's "hardened" attitude toward Soviet expansionism as an asset in his campaign against Senator Kennedy, noting that the senator had criticized the President for "exaggerating" the significance of the Soviet move. While welcoming what it sees as a shift to a stronger U.S. stance toward Moscow since the Afghan invasion, Beijing has suggested that the Administration's policies are less a product of consistency in conviction and principles than a response to growing public pressure on the President to defend U.S. strategic interests.

Commentary on the Republican Party primaries has portrayed Governor Reagan as a "hardliner" on the Soviet Union from the start and has seen his success as a product of the conservative U.S. mood. Chinese media virtually ignored statements by Governor Reagan in May on restoring some form of official ties with Taiwan, but in early June--presumably once the governor had emerged as the prospective Republican nominee--authoritative Chinese press commentary attacked his views as a potential threat to Sino-U.S. relations. That Beijing commented on this issue at all breaks with its usual pattern of silence--except when reacting to statements on Taiwan by Administration officials--and underlines the persistent anxiety of the Chinese leadership about U.S. attitudes toward Taiwan. On 23 June and 2 July the Chinese party paper RENMIN RIBAO asserted that Reagan's "preposterous views" on this issue are extremely "unpopular" and may harm his election campaign; subsequently XINHUA reported assurances by the governor that he has no intention of altering the current PRC-U.S. relationship.

Media attention to the Republican convention reaffirmed the themes predominating in coverage of the primary campaign. XINHUA's 16 July report on Governor Reagan's nomination, for example, observed that his success "reflects the change of mood" among Republican voters resulting from the "tremendous difficulties in the country's economy and its position abroad."

Beijing has described Congressman Anderson as the "only liberal" among Republican candidates. While noting his call for a firm U.S. military response to further Soviet expansion in the Persian Gulf region--a stance the PRC favors--Beijing has also pointed out that he is an advocate of SALT and an opponent of increased defense spending. After Congressman Anderson announced his independent candidacy, RENMIN RIBAO on 2 July published a background report on U.S. constitutional procedure in the event of the failure of any candidate to win a clear majority.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FBIS SPECIAL MEMORANDUM  
25 JULY 1980

- 6 -

## PROSPECTS

Chinese commentary on the election campaign has predictably indicated no clear preference for any candidate and has eschewed speculation about who might be the victor. A 7 June RENMIN RIBAO analysis of the campaign did observe, however, that persistent disunity within the Democratic Party between the President and Senator Kennedy and the independent campaign of Congressman Anderson may harm President Carter's prospects in November. The commentary observed that while the President's election campaign staff had initially considered Governor Reagan the most easily defeated Republican, "such optimistic views have rarely been heard recently." At the same time, commentary on the Republican convention reflected Beijing's doubts about Governor Reagan. A 16 July RENMIN RIBAO commentary, for example, examined evidence that the governor was moderating his "hawkish" views and his policy on China and commented that "so far no one has sufficient clues" to know how he will act.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

*For Official Use Only*

*For Official Use Only*